

DPHHS PERSONAL SERVICES QUESTIONS

1. (a) Has the agency implemented a broad band pay plan, agency-wide or for selected jobs?

The Department began with selected positions depending on the needs of the program (e.g. to ensure good customer service and maintain qualified, experienced staff; for recruitment issues; reduce turnover; to be competitive with other state agencies and the private sector). Other than registered nurses at Warm Springs (currently negotiated, but not yet implemented), the AMDD has only a handful of positions currently moved to the broad band pay plan.

(b) If so, when was it implemented and what were the estimated cost increases in the year of implementation?

All broad band position conversions were authorized in SFY 2006. There have not been cost increases resulting from the pay plan 20 conversions, although it is anticipated that the registered nurses may be eligible for wage increases when moved to the new pay bands.

(c) How were these costs funded (by holding vacant positions open, appropriations for other purposes that were unexpended, etc)?

Not applicable as there have not been increased salary costs due to very limited implementation.

2. (a) At what percentage of market are new employees paid?

New employees to state government are paid at entry level for each specific grade classification. Employees can progress to the market rate by: statutory pay increases, successful completion of a training assignment, retention pay exception (in pay plan 60), market adjustment (in pay plan 20), competence or performance pay adjustment (in pay plan 20).

(b) How do employees progress to the market rate for their position?

The agency would like to see all employees move eventually to 100% of market to provide us with a greater opportunity to retain staff. When employees are moved to pay plan 20, our practice has been to ensure all employees are paid at least at entry, which is 80 percent.

(c) What is the agency target percent of market?

The department has not established a target percentage other than the initial effort suggesting 85 percent of market as existing staff positions move to pay plan 20.

(d) What is the agency average percent of market in FY 2006?

Generally, the percent of market is between 80 and 85 percent.

3. Did the agency have vacant positions for a significant portion (6 months or more) of FY 2006?

Yes.

If yes, how many and why were these vacant? How did the vacancies impact agency operations?

Montana State Hospital had 5 positions vacant for more than 6 months in SFY 2006 due to recruitment issues. The vacancies caused an increased workload to other staff in the units or were filled with on-call staff when necessary.

Montana Mental Health Nursing Care Center had 4 long-term (6 months or more) vacancies. The vacancies cause an increased workload for other staff and may require the use of overtime or on-call staff.

4. Did the agency have authorized pay exceptions for pay plan 60 positions? If yes, why?

Yes. The Department allows requests for pay exceptions under two primary circumstances: 1) reorganization where a person was inadvertently downgraded as a result of the reorganization (also called pay protection); and 2) when for retention and recruitment issues.

During the fiscal year from July 1, 2005 through June 20, 2006 the following pay exceptions occurred in accordance with Pay Plan 60 rules:

Rule 1827 (1) In SFY 2006, pay exceptions were authorized to mitigate difficult recruitment problems at the Montana State Hospital. Additionally, in late SFY 2005, the Montana Mental Health Nursing Care Center was granted a pay exception due to recruitment and retention problems. The majority of these pay exceptions were required in order to hire qualified candidates in direct care positions like nursing and aide positions. For these type of positions, the Department is competing with hospitals, other health care providers, and other public health agencies.

Rule 1829 During the fiscal year, DPHHS worked with the Department of Administration and the Governor's Budget office to authorize multi-position pay exceptions. These were authorized to mitigate recruitment and retention problems at facilities which offer specific services to the citizens of Montana: Montana Chemical Dependency Center (treatment specialists, nurses, mental health professionals and substance abuse counselors).

5. Did the agency have authorized position upgrades or downgrades for pay plan 60 positions? If yes, why?

According to MOM policy #3-0401, the Department of Administration may delegate authority to classify new positions and reclassify existing positions to an agency that meets specific requirements. The exercise of this authority is final, subject to review by the Department of Administration under Rule 1722, Classification Reviews of the above referenced policy.

Delegation of classification authority is provided to an agency when staff, assigned to review and classify positions, has been trained according to the standards provided by classification specialists in the State Personnel Division of the Department of Administration. The above referenced policy also states that, "An agency may not hire a person to fill a position until that position has been properly classified. Job selection procedures must be based on a job analysis, which requires, at minimum, a description of current job duties. Agencies should review vacant positions before filling them to ensure that they are correctly classified."

In addition to review of vacant positions prior to recruitment, reviews are also initiated when filled positions experience substantial changes in predominant duties or when supervision has been added or deleted from the position.

During the 05-06 fiscal year, the Human Resources Department review 3 Addictive and Mental Disorders Division positions that resulted in downgrades and 18 positions that resulted in upgrades.

In addition, the Human Resources Department received one multiple position reclassification request that affected 125 positions at Montana State Hospital. This review resulted in a one grade upgrade for these positions. Although DPHHS has been delegated the authority to review and classify positions by the State Personnel Division in the Department of Administration, any multiple position classification requires review and concurrence of State Personnel Division classification staff prior to finalization of the review.

6. What challenges does the agency face in recruiting and retaining staff? What actions has the agency taken to address recruitment and retention issues? Is the agency competing with other state agencies or the public sector for staff?

In areas where labor markets are thriving, such as Missoula and Bozeman, programs experience a much higher turnover rate. Moving to PP20 was an effort to increase wages in a small way to help recruit and retain staff. The Department has heard anecdotally that moving to PP20 has helped in both recruitment and retention however we are still not competitive with private sector or other state agencies that have moved to a higher percentage of market than we were able to afford. The Department goal, under PP20 is to assess each classification and depending on program needs, retention and recruiting issues move employees closer to market, while being fiscally responsible.

The Montana State Hospital and the Montana Chemical Dependency Center do compete with the Department of Corrections (DOC) directly or with DOC contractors. In addition, other public funded entities (hospitals, chemical dependency programs, Montana Development Center, etc) also compete for staff regionally.

The Montana Mental Health Nursing Care Center has to deal with hospitals in Great Falls and Billings and other nursing care facilities.

7. (a) Are agency staff members represented by collective bargaining units?

Yes.

(b) How many of the agency staff are impacted by collective bargaining unit agreements?

Currently, 2080 DPHHS employees are covered by collective bargaining agreements.

(c) What provisions are included in bargaining unit agreements?

Typically, these provisions are included: union and management rights, non-discrimination, labor-management committees, pay and hours, insurance, overtime and compensatory time, the various leaves, workers compensation, grievances and arbitration, employee rights, job posting, health and safety, use of private automobiles, retirement, payroll deductions, not strike/no lockout, term of the agreement, and pay schedules.

(d) How often are these agreements negotiated?

These agreements are negotiated for a two-year period. Occasionally, agreements are “rolled over” without any negotiation being conducted. Usually the agreements are opened and the parties negotiate a new contract every two years.